

**South Korean Travelers to**  
**CALIFORNIA**

**Prepared for**  
**California Tourism**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *SOUTH KOREAN TRAVELERS TO CALIFORNIA*

**Total Market.** Of 705,000 South Korean visitors to the U.S., 35.8%, or 252,000 visited California in 2005. This represented a 7.7% increase from 2004, and a drop of 40% from the peak year of 2000. South Korean arrival volumes at California ports-of-entry were showing an increase in 2006 after increasing slightly in each of the previous three years.

	Visitors to CA from So. Korea (est.)	So. Korea to CA as % of total US
1994	243,000	48.8%
1995	236,000	39.9%
1996	247,000	32.9%
1997	291,000	39.0%
1998	189,000	52.0%
1999	307,000	61.5%
2000	419,000	63.3%
2001	286,000	46.3%
2002	285,000	44.7%
2003	303,000	49.0%
2004	273,000	43.5%
2005	252,000	35.8%

**Main Destination.** About three-fourths of all South Korean visitors to California (74%) reported California was the main destination of their U.S. trip. Leisure visitors from South Korea reported a similar percentage (78%).

**Purpose of Trip.** Among all South Korean visitors to California in 2005, 49% reported vacation/holiday was one of their major reasons for traveling. Other reasons for traveling included visiting friends/relatives (48%), business (41%), and attending a convention (14%).

Visitors often report multiple purposes of trip. Most leisure visitors from South Korea (73%) reported visiting friends and relatives in California in 2005. The proportion of leisure visitors who were on vacation/holiday was 71%.

**Port of Entry.** A combined total of 75% of South Korean visitors to California entered the U.S. through west coast ports. Nearly half (44%) entered through Los Angeles, followed by San Francisco (31%).

**Top Metropolitan Areas Visited in California.** South Korean visitors to California in 2005 tended to center their trip itineraries on the major cities of Los Angeles (55%), San Francisco (40%) and San Jose (15%).

**Leisure/Recreation Activities.** The top leisure and recreation activities reported by visitors from South Korea, whether traveling for business or leisure, were shopping, dining and visiting amusement/theme parks. South Korean travelers are less likely to dine in restaurants or sightsee in cities than other overseas visitor groups.

**Advance Trip Decision.** South Korean travelers to California reported making their trip decision 45 days in advance of their trip. This is a shorter average trip decision time than the 90 days reported by all overseas visitors to California. South Korean leisure travelers made their trip decision 60 days in advance of their trip.

**Means of Booking Air Trip.** Almost two-thirds of South Korean travelers to California (64%) booked their air trip via a travel agent, similar to the 65% in 2004. This result was a little higher than other major overseas markets to California (57%).

**Means of Booking Lodging.** A total of 23% of all South Korean visitors and 19% of South Korean leisure travelers pre-booked their lodging via a travel agent. In 2005 14% of South Korean travelers reported booking lodging through a travel agent or corporate travel department each respectively. While about 19% of leisure South Korean travelers used travel agents to book their accommodations, and 20% did so through their friends or relatives.

**Trip Information Sources.** Among South Korean visitors to California, the most frequently mentioned sources of information included a travel agency (53%), followed by personal computer (44%), friends/relatives (19%), direct information from airlines (18%), and corporate travel departments (11%).

**Length of Stay.** South Korean visitors stayed an average of 20.7 nights in the U.S. and 13.1 nights in California. Length of stay in California was down from 18.2 nights in 2004. In comparison the length of stay for all overseas visitors to California was 10.6 nights in the state.

**Sex and Age.** Men comprised 66% of South Korean travelers to California with a median age of 41 years. This is about the same median age reported by all overseas visitors to California (42 years). Women represented 34% of all South Korean travelers to California in 2005, with a median age of 35 years compared to 40 years reported by all overseas female visitors. Looking at leisure travel only, about 48% of South Korean leisure travelers to California are men and 52% are women.

**Travel Party Size.** Nearly all (94%) of South Korean travel groups consist of adults only. Only 6.3% of South Korean travel groups to California include children. The mean travel party size for all South Korean visitors to the state was 1.5 people and the party size for leisure visitors was 1.6 people.

**Annual Household Income.** Visitors from South Korea reported relatively low median household incomes (\$67,100) relative to all overseas visitors to California (\$78,800). The median household income of South Korean leisure visitors to California was (\$67,900).

**Accommodations.** More than two-thirds of South Korean visitors (69%) to California chose a hotel or motel as their primary type of accommodation during their stay in 2005. This proportion is lower than the 79% reported by all overseas visitors to California. South Korean leisure visitors reported an even lower propensity to stay in a hotel/motel (47%). A relatively high 37% of all South Korean visitors and 59% of South Korean leisure visitors stayed in a private home in 2005.

**Use of Prepaid Package.** In 2005, only 7% of South Korean visitors and 10% of South Korean leisure visitors used prepaid packages.

**Expenditures.** Visitors to California from South Korea spent an estimated 333 million dollars in California in 2005. South Korean visitors were spending an average of \$101 per day during their visit. Leisure visitors from South Korea spent an average of \$84 per day. Each visitor to California from South Korea spent an average of \$1,323 in the state, and each leisure visitor spent an average of \$1,218 in California.

**Average International Airfare.** Average international airfare to the U.S. was \$1,456 for South Korean visitors and \$1,268 for South Korean leisure visitors.